Shifting of Lions of Gir Sanctuary

2616. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have taken note of the strong opposition in Gujarat to the reported move to shift the Gir sanctuary lions to Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the decision has been reversed;

(c) if not, what are the reasons for such a decision; and

(d) what is likely expenditure on this project and when is it likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has taken note of the opposition in Gujarat to translocate few lions from Gir sanctuary in Gujarat to Kuno-Palpur sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The project aims at safeguarding against the population of Asiatic lions being wiped out by any natural catastrophe.

(d) The approximate expenditure for this project is expected to be Rs. 65 crores. The actual translocation of lions is expected to be done during the year 2000.

Impact of Vehicular Pollution on Adolescents

2617. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some study undertaken by the Centre of Occupational and Environmental Medicine has shown that adolescents' athletic and academic performance and attendance in schools are adversely affected by vehicular pollution;

(b) if so, other adverse effects which have come to notice with such study;

(c) whether Government propose to take some drastic action in the matter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The study was carried out by the Centre of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. No conclusive evidence on the incidence of ailments due to vehicular pollution could be inferred.

(c) and (d) The Government has taken measures to control pollution, which include the following:

(i) The Government has formulated a comprehensive Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution which envisages integration of environmental and economic aspects of development planning, lays stress on preventive aspects of pollution, promotion of cleaner technologies to reduce pollution and health related aspects;

(ii) Fiscal incentives are provided for installation of pollution control equipment and also for the shifting of industries from congested areas.

(iii) Low lead petrol had been introduced in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai w.e.f. June 1994. Subsequently, unleaded petrol was introduced in the above mentioned 4 cities with effect from 1.4.1995;

(iv) The Government is implementing a major plan of action for introduction of unleaded petrol and catalytic converter fitted vehicles and introduction of low sulphur diesel for cleaner diesel vehicles in a phased manner. Fuel quality standards for petrol and diesel have been notified.

(v) A major programme for introduction of unleaded petrol and catalytic converter fitted vehicles is under implementation. The first phase covering the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai, came into effect on 1.4.95.

(vi) Gross emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for all categories of new vehicles have been notified under the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 and are being enforced by the Departments of Transport of the various States.

(vii) For control of pollution from vehicles, emission norms for both petrol and diesel driven vehicles at the manufacturing stage were introduced for the first time in 1990 and made tighter in 1996. More stringent emission norms have also been notified and will come into effect from 1.4.2000.

(viii) Surveys have been conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board on the vehicular emissions in the major cities and towns in the country. The findings of the survey have been used for taking mitigative measures.

(ix) The ambient air quality of various cities and towns are being monitored regularly through a network of 290 monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme.

(x) Emission from highly polluting industrial units and thermal power plants are regularly monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards and action is taken against the defaulting units.

(xi) Emissions and ambient air quality standards have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Efficacy of Forest Conservation and Environment Protection Acts

2618. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Forest Conservation Act and the Environment Protection Act do not meet the needs of the changing times and major changes are called for therein;

(b) if so, the major points contained in the representations, if any, made by industry, the tribals and the State Governments; and

(c) the action taken to meet the demands for review of the Acts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted with a view to regulate indiscriminate diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes so as to conserve the Nation's forest resources. Similarly, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has been enacted to provide for protection and improvement of environment and prevention of hazards to human beings, other living creatures, plants and property. The above two Acts have, therefore, been enacted for the overall interest of human beings, living creatures and their environment. This Ministry has received from time to time representations in respect of the above two Acts from various fora including States as well as other agencies. In respect of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the representations have been mainly regarding delegation of powers to divert forest land upto certain extent to the State Governments, regularisation of encroachments over forest land by tribals and other people, relaxation in respect of certain provisions such as compensatory afforestation etc. stipulated while according approval to development projects. Regarding Environment (Protection) Act, representations received